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ABSTRACT

Described are components of the competency based teacher training program in learning disabilities at the University of North Florida. Presented are the program's thirteen generic competencies, including statement of objectives in observable terms, identification of pupil interest and motivation, modality assessment, developmental sequence of lessons, use of reinforcement, and instruction for transfer and generalization. The developmental sequence of 10 required courses in the program is explained, and student evaluation measures during three practicum phases are discussed. The program is also said to provide information on program and faculty effectiveness. (CL)

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A Competency Based Teacher Training Program in Learning Disabilities

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A Competency Based Teacher Training Program in Learning Disabilities[1]

Program Philosophy

The philosophy of the special education program at the University of North Florida is to develop a competency based teacher training program at the masters level. This program will produce teachers who can quantitatively demonstrate that they can produce academic achievement gains and desirable behavior changes in learning disabled children and all special education children whether they are in self contained special education classes, regular classes, resource rooms or being prepared to be returned to the mainstream of education.

Program Objective

The basic component of the program revolves around thirteen generic competencies that are felt to be basic to the training of all teachers. Individually these competencies have been validated by research and literature as being significant in the preparation of teachers (Van Nagel 1974). These competencies have been found necessary to promote academic achievement gains and desirable behavior changes in children. (The generic competencies are germane to L.D. teachers, consulting teachers, resource room teachers and regular classroom teachers responsible for the education of children.)

Following are presented the thirteen generic competencies.

[1]The authors wish to acknowledge the support given to the program by the Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped through a Handicapped Personnel Preparation Grant. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the advise and assistance of Martha Bokee, Project Officer for the State of Florida. Reprints may be obtained from Clint Van Nagel, Department of Special Education, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida 32216

A Competency Based Teacher Training Program

in Learning Disabilities

Abstract

The philosophy of the special education program at the University of North Florida is to develop a competency based teacher training program at the masters level. This program will produce teachers who can quantitatively demonstrate that they can produce academic achievement gains and desirable behavior changes in learning disabled children and all special education children whether they are in self contained special education classes, regular classes, resource rooms or being prepared to be returned to the mainstream of education.

The basic component of the program revolves around thirteen generic competencies that are felt to be basic to the training of all teachers. Individually these competencies have been validated by research and literature as being significant in the preparation of teachers (Van Nagel 1974). These competencies have been found necessary to promote academic achievement gains and desirable behavior changes in children. (The generic competencies are germane to L.D. teachers, consulting teachers, resource room teachers and regular classroom teachers responsible for the education of children.)

University of North Florida

Special Education Department

Generic Competencies

Evaluation Form for Individualized Instruction

Name: _____ Date: _____

School: _____ Evaluator: _____

	Criteria Evidenced	Criteria Not Evidenced
I. Objectives. Lesson plans are stated in observable and measurable terms. The teacher states his/her long range objective and enroute (daily) objectives in terms which are observable and measurable. The objective describes what the learner will be doing, under what conditions the learner will perform, and the criteria of success.	_____	_____

II. Rapport. The teacher has established rapport with the pupil. This is evidenced by E and one or more of the following:

A. The pupil initiates conversation with the teacher

B. The pupil asks the teacher questions

C. The pupil smiles at the teacher

D. The pupil offers help to the teacher

E. The objectives have been communicated to the learner. This is evidenced by

		Criteria Evidenced	Criteria Not Evidenced
	pupil verbal statements as to what he and the teacher are trying to accomplish.	_____	_____
III.	Motivation. The teacher has identified the pupil's interests and used the student's interests in his/her lessons. This is evidenced by (a) completion of an interest inventory and (b) the instructional materials and/or the teacher's verbal statements reflecting the student's interests.	_____	_____
IV.	Entering Behavior. The teacher has determined the pupil's entering behavior as evidenced by criterion referenced testing.	_____	_____
V.	Modality Assessment. The teacher has identified the pupil's strongest modality or modalities of learning. This is evidenced by diagnostic testing. (Mill's Methods Learning Test or a similar test or technique.)	_____	_____
VI.	Elicitors Identified. The methods or materials employed in the lesson bring forth desirable pupil responses. This is evidenced by:		
	A. Pupil attention to task and/or teacher		
	B. Completion or near completion of task		
	C. Emission of desirable behaviors on the part of the pupil. (Evaluated by supervisor or professor.)	_____	_____

	Criteria Evidenced	Criteria Not Evidenced
VII. Lessons are Developmental. The teacher's lessons for the pupil contain enroute objectives that are hierarchically arranged and directly related to the terminal objective. This is noted by examining the daily Diagnostic Prescriptive Teaching forms of the teacher and by looking specifically at the enroute objectives. Instruction should: A. be hierarchically arranged B. proceed from the concrete to the abstract C. proceed from simple to complex skills	_____	_____
VIII. Reinforces Achievement. The teacher uses reinforcement techniques to increase the academic achievement of the pupil. This is evidenced by: A. Observation and audition of teacher's verbal statements in response to learner behavior by supervisor or professor, and/or B. Written records of symbolic reinforcers for gains in pupil achievement.	_____	_____
IX. Reinforces desirable behavior - does not reinforce undesirable behavior. The teacher applies reinforcement techniques to pupil		

	Criteria Evidenced	Criteria Not Evidenced
behavior. This is evidenced by:		
A. Observation and audition of the teacher's behavior in response to pupil behavior and/or		
B. Written records that evidence baseline data and reinforcement interventions		
C. The pupil's behavior, as recorded by the teacher, must show desirable progressive developmental changes in the pupil's deficit behavior or a decrease in the interfering behavior.	_____	_____
X. Reinforcement schedules and reinforcement levels.		
A. The teacher's reinforcement schedule evidence change in the ratio or interval or reinforcement. This is noted under the category of contingency on the Diagnostic-Prescriptive Teaching Forms, or		
B. The teacher reinforcement level has changed. This is noted under Reinforcement Level on the Diagnostic-Prescriptive Teaching Forms.	_____	_____

	Criteria Evidenced	Criteria Not Evidenced
XI. Evaluation. The teacher will evaluate instruction in terms of behavior change. This is evidenced by the following:		
A. Written notation of the Diagnostic-Prescriptive Teaching Forms under the category of Objective Accomplished and Explanation.		
B. The success rate of the pupil (the pupil's work is attached to the Diagnostic-Prescriptive form). Toward the completion of the lesson the pupil should have achieved correctly 9 out of 10 responses or have answered correctly 90% of the time.	_____	_____
XII. Teaches for transfer and generalization. The pupil evidences the behavior he has learned in an instructional setting in other settings. This is noted by observation and audition of the teacher, supervisor, professor or other persons, and is recorded under the category Generalization of Learning on the Diagnostic-Prescriptive Teaching forms.	_____	_____

	Criteria Evidenced	Criteria Not Evidenced
XIII. Knowledge of theoretical and scientific studies. The teacher can translate scientific studies and theoretical formulation into effective educational implementation:		
A. The teacher, at all times, must be able to give a rationale for what she is doing. This rationale should be verifiable by the literature in the field.		
B. The teacher answers correctly 80% of the questions on an objective exam.	_____	_____

University of North Florida

Department of Special Education

Diagnostic Prescriptive Form

Pupil _____ Date _____ Lesson # ____ Teacher _____

Ia. Terminal Objective _____

_____

Ib. Enroute Objective _____

_____

II. Rapport Established _____ Yes _____ No

A. Long range objective communicated to learner _____ Yes _____ No

B. Enroute objective communicated to learner _____ Yes _____ No

III. Pupil's Interests _____

IV. Entering Behavior _____

_____

Va. Modality: Strongest _____ Weakest _____ How established _____

Vb. Modality Emphasized: ___ Visual ___ Auditory ___ Haptic

___ Combination

VIa. Elicitor Level: Describe _____

b. _____Abstract _____Semi-Abstract _____ Concrete

c. Method of Relating _____

_____

d. Activity _____

_____

VII, VIII, IX, X. Reinforcers:

Describe _____

_____ Abstract _____ Social _____ Symbolic _____ Primary

Contingency _____

Rating: _____ Good _____ Fair _____ Poor

XI. Objective Accomplished: _____ Yes _____ No

Number of Responses Correct: _____ Out of _____ or percentage of time _____

Explanation: _____

XII. Generalization of Learning - Describe: _____

_____

These thirteen generic competencies have been further subdivided into specific competencies which are clustered into courses. The student progresses through a developmental sequence of courses preparing him/her to demonstrate the competencies in the final or practicum phase of the program. As courses progress from beginning to end, the competencies are introduced, elaborated upon and further extended

and developed. A student must minimally demonstrate the competencies for each course before exiting that course. If a student fails to demonstrate the competencies of two or more courses after being given the opportunity to recycle, he/she is counseled concerning their future in the program. The successful completion of the course sequence permits the teacher trainee to enter the practicum phases of the program. Below is presented a course sequence for the learning disability program with reference to the specific generic competencies covered.

Learning Disabilities

Program of Studies

Required Courses in Learning Disabilities

EEC 500 Introduction to Special Education. The content, nature, issues, and trends of professions related to the education of the exceptional child. The course includes current terminology, definitions, and educational provisions in exceptional child education. (Generic Competencies: XIII)

EEC 502 Behavioral Management of the Mal-Adaptive and Disruptive Child. An introduction to the theory and techniques of classroom management. (Generic Competencies: I,II,III,VI,VIII,IX,X,XII,XIII)

EDU 603 General Education Competencies: Behavior Modification. A course designed to equip the classroom teacher and administer with the knowledge and skills necessary to plan, conduct, and evaluate behavioral modification programs within a classroom setting. (Generic Competencies: I,II,III,VI,VII,IX,X,XII,XII)

EEC 510 Language Development and Communication Disorders. An introduction to the developmental aspects of language with attention paid to the teacher's ability to diagnose and correct communication disorders. (Generic Competencies: IV,V,VI,VII,XI,XII,XIII)

EEC 512 Psychology and Education of the Learning Disabled. An introduction to the problems, nature, and needs of the learning disabled child. Topics considered include causes, characteristics, incidence, and educational implications. (Generic Competencies: III,IV,V,VI,VII, VIII,XI,XII,XIII)

EEC 604 Special Education Generic Competencies: Laboratory in Evaluation. An extension of the student's evaluation skills to include attention to specialized tests in specific disability areas. Emphasis will be placed on translating test results into educational practice as well as stressing the skills necessary for evaluating ongoing programs. (Generic Competencies: III,IV,XI,XIII)

EEC 605 Psychodiagnosis of Learning Problems. Focuses on the development of skills in instructional diagnosis utlizing the behavioral and neuro sensory approaches to develop appropriate academic and social responses in the child. (Generic Competencies: III,IV,VI,VII,VIII, XI,XII,XIII)

EEC 606 Special Education Generic Competencies: Curriculum, Methods, and Materials. Curricula, methods, and materials relevant to teaching the handicapped child in groups and individually. (All generic competencies are evaluated in this course. This includes phase one of Practicum - individual instruction.)

EEC 680 Advanced Seminar in Current Topics in Special Education. A seminar designed for advanced special education student that allows for an in-depth study of specific topics in Learning Disabilities.

EEC 675 Practicum in Special Education. Supervised field experience in Learning Disabilities. This is Phase Two and Three of the Practicum where all generic competencies are evaluated in small group and large group instruction.

Practicum

Practicum Phase I

The Practicum Phase I of the program provides an opportunity for the teacher trainee to demonstrate quantitatively that he/she has mastered the basic thirteen generic competencies that are deemed necessary to promote academic achievement and desirable behavior change in an exceptional child. Practicum Phase I is held for one quarter and involves supervised contact with an exceptional child.

During the practica phases each teacher trainee must keep a record of terminal objectives and enroute objectives and reinforcement schedules in the format of a detailed structured lesson plan provided by the department. The structured Diagnostic-Prescriptive outline for lesson plans was presented following the statement of the thirteen generic competencies. If the student does not demonstrate the thirteen generic competencies and/or does not produce achievement gain or desirable behavior changes in an exceptional child, then that student must recycle Practicum Phase I. After the student has demonstrated the thirteen generic competencies and has quantitatively demonstrated that he/she can produce achievement gains and desirable behavior changes with one exceptional child, he/she is then permitted to enter Practicum Phase Two.

Practicum Phase II

Practicum Phase II involves teaching a minimum of three exceptional children in a group. Again the student must demonstrate the thirteen generic competencies and produce achievement gains and desirable behavior changes with exceptional children in a small group settings. During this phase the teacher trainee is observed by a member of the faculty for the purpose of evaluating whether the teacher trainee is successfully employing the thirteen generic competencies in small group instruction.

Practicum Phase III

In Practicum Phase III the teacher trainee is observed by a member of the faculty and, when appropriate, a supervisor of the public school program for the purpose of evaluating whether the teacher is incorporating the thirteen generic competencies in his/her everyday instruction. (See below.)

Evaluation Form For Group Instruction

Name: _____

School: _____

Date: _____

Evaluator: _____

	Criteria Evidenced	Criteria Not Evidenced
Objectives		
1. The teacher's lesson plans are stated in behavioral terms; the objective describes what the learner will be doing, under what conditions the learner will perform, and criteria of success.	_____	_____

	Criteria Evidenced	Criteria Not Evidenced

Rapport

2. The teacher trainee has established rapport with the students. This is evidenced by one or more of the following:

   A. the pupils ask questions of the teacher

   B. the pupils contribute information to the discussion taking place

   C. the objectives of the lesson have been communicated to the students (Evaluation is achieved by asking the student the objective of the lesson). _____ _____

Motivation

3. The teacher uses the interests and ideas of the pupils in the lesson or discussion. This is evidenced by one or more of the following:

   A. the teacher discusses or uses an idea of a student or students

   B. the teacher discusses an interest of a student or students

   C. the teacher incorporates the student's thoughts, ideas or comments into a lesson _____ _____

	Criteria Evidenced	Criteria Not Evidenced
Entering Behavior		
4. The teacher is aware of the entering behavior of a group of students. This is evidenced by one or more of the following:		
A. all the students in the group are functioning at approximately the same level		
B. the teacher is aware of each student's behavior in reading and arithmetic (This is evaluated by questioning on the part of the supervisor).		
C. pre-evaluation in the form of checklists or criterion referenced testing has recently occurred		
D. students are experiencing success with the tasks they are attempting	_____	_____
Elicitors Identified		
5. The methods and materials employed in the group lesson bring forth desirable pupil responses. This is evidenced by:		
A. pupil attention to task or teacher		
B. completion or near completion of the task		
C. emission of desirable behaviors on the part of the pupil (evaluation of supervisor)	_____	_____

	Criteria Evidenced	Criteria Not Evidenced
Classroom Reinforcement System		
6. The teacher reinforces desirable pupil achievement and behavior. This is evidenced by one or more of the following:		
A. the teacher verbally reinforces appropriate student behavior or achievement		
B. the teacher has a token system in effect that is clearly defined and systematic	_____	_____
Lessons Are Developmental		
7. Materials and methods have been selected and organized in a developmental sequence and are directly related to the objective of the lesson. (Evaluation by supervisor)	_____	_____
Classroom Environment		
8. The classroom environment is conducive to learning. This is evidenced by:		
A. appropriate display of materials		
B. advance preparation of materials		
C. the general organization of software and hardware in the classroom	_____	_____
Evaluation		
9. The teacher evaluates the outcome of instruction. This is evidenced by one or more of		

	Criteria Evidenced	Criteria Not Evidenced
the following:		
A. questioning at the end of the lesson and throughout the lesson		
B. a post test		
C. student application of the instruction	_____	_____
Teaches for Transfer and Generalization		
10. The pupil evidences knowledge of the correlation between what is learned in school and the outside world by:		
A. verbally pointing out examples		
B. having students generalize or apply the findings to other situations		
C. the students demonstrate the knowledge learned in school to other situations	_____	_____

The practica sites for Phases One, Two and Three are in keeping with the University policy and are held in the communities' schools. For those students who do not have access to a special education class during the academic year, special arrangements are made to provide a practicum site during the summer.

If a teacher trainee fails to meet the thirteen generic objectives or competencies of the program, then that teacher is recycled through Phase One, Two or Three depending upon his/her deficiency. Each teacher trainee is given continuous feedback throughout the practica regarding his/her performance. This is done by special education personnel. When the student

has completed all phases of the practica, and has demonstrated these competencies and has produced achievement gain and desirable behavior changes in exceptional children, then he or she is ready to be awarded a Master of Education degree.

Evaluation of Practica Phases I, II and III

The procedure for a competency based program with objectives, course work and methodology was described in the previous section. The major evaluation of the graduate teacher trainees occurs in Practica Phases I, II and III. The practica phases occur in local educational facilities. The evaluation for Practicum Phase I is as follows: In the Practicum Phase I, the graduate teacher trainee works with one exceptional child. The student prepares beforehand, according to a structured lesson format provided by the Special Education Department, a lesson for the child. When the teacher meets with the child in the practicum, he/she then proceeds to teach the child according to the lesson plan he/she has devised. A member of the faculty constantly supervises and evaluates the instruction of the teacher trainee via diagnostic-prescriptive forms. At the conclusion of Phase I all teacher trainees are evaluated on the thirteen generic competencies and their ability to produce desirable behavior changes and achievement gains in pupils.

Upon observation and audition of the graduate teacher trainee both the supervisor and the observer independently rate the teacher trainees performance. The two forms are then compared for reliability. If there is not 80% agreement between the two observers then that observation is disregarded. Teacher trainees who do not demonstrate the competencies for small and large group instruction and who have not demonstrated

significant achievement gains and desirable behavior changes in students are recycled.* Feedback regarding the strength and weakness of the program from practica supervisors is an ongoing process. This feedback is used to modify, revise or change program components.

General Program Evaluation

In the previous sections, methods of evaluating the Practica were discussed. In addition, several other techniques were utilized to obtain evaluation information relating to other components of the masters' program.

Implementation and Refinement Evaluation Procedures for three areas of the program will be discussed. These areas are: (a) program effectiveness, (b) faculty effectiveness, and (c) student product.

Program Effectiveness

The Special Education Department of the University of North Florida has adopted a Discrepancy Evaluation Model which was designed at the Evaluation Research Center at the University of Virginia as a Technical Assistance Project. This evaluation process uses an input, process, output model to describe the total program. A systems approach is used which results in the design of evaluation instruments.

To ascertain the long range effectiveness of the program, employers of the University of North Florida graduates assist in the evaluation process. A rating scale is submitted to the employer of the program graduates on which they indicate their evaluation of job performance. Space is available for

* Significant achievement is evaluated by a correlated test of significance between pretest achievement score and post-test achievement scores. Desirable behavior change is evaluated by behavioral designs.

suggestions of additional skills the employers feel are necessary for effective teaching. This information is used in competency development and refinement.

The Special Education Department has periodic meetings with its Advisory Council. The Council is composed of selected members of the local population who are involved in the Special Education field. Program competencies are submitted to the council members for their review and suggestions. Other departmental activities and community needs are brought before the Council for mutual discussion.

National consultants are invited to the campus to evaluate the Special Education Program. Dr. Jack Dinger (1975) and Dr. Clyde Combs (1976) have reviewed the program and have made recommendations.

Program graduates provide a further technique for determining program effectiveness. A rating scale is submitted to each graduate to indicate his/her perceptions of the quality of the graduate training program. Space is provided for additional suggestions the graduate may wish to make. Information and recommendations from all of the above sources are utilized in competency and program refinement.

Faculty Effectiveness

Students have been provided with a direct and viable method of reporting on faculty effectiveness. At the conclusion of each class session, each student is given a class evaluation form on which to indicate his/her perceptions of the presentation. This information is used for continuous evaluation and revision. Data from the class evaluation forms is summarized graphically for each class session and cumulatively at the end of each course.

Student advisement is another area in which faculty effectiveness is evaluated. An Appointment and Advisement Form is completed by each student during the advisement session. This form is filed in the student's folder to provide a permanent record of the student's questions and concerns with the faculty recommendations.

Faculty effectiveness as related to course content and modules is evaluated by the department chairman and members of the faculty. Workshops have been scheduled during which the modules have been reviewed in order to provide a continuous sequence within the Master's Program. Modules have been continually updated and refined.

The University of North Florida provides an additional method of evaluating faculty effectiveness. An overall assessment form is provided for each student at the conclusion of each course. The rating scale provides data in the areas of content, instructional strategy, class presentations, textbooks and assignments. The computerized results of these evaluation instruments are available to the department chairman to assist in counselling faculty members.

Student Product

Perhaps the most important area of evaluation concerns the graduate student's teaching ability. While there are practica and field experience components of many of the courses, the final practicum provides the most intensive evaluation of the student's teaching skill. A detailed discussion of the Practicum II procedure has been presented.

During the practicum the student is required to demonstrate total integrative ability by showing academic gain and desirable behavior change in pupils. The practicum student must assess pupils' entering behavior and

plan, implement and evaluate instructional sequences based upon the results of this initial assessment. In addition, strategies are designed, implemented and evaluated to provide pupils with motivational and acceptable behavioral patterns.

A follow up evaluation is made by employers of program graduates. Teaching effectiveness is rated by the graduate's supervisor. This data provides information concerning the application and generalizability of competencies demonstrated in the practicum setting.

As the preceding discussion indicates, a comprehensive evaluation strategy has been implemented at the University of North Florida. This information leads to continuous revisement and refinement of the Special Education Program.

Reference

Combs, C., Personal Communication, January, 1976

Dinger, J., Personal Communication, February, 1975.

Van Nagel, C., Teacher preparation for work with the emotionally disturbed (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1974)